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## II.

# YOUNG MEN IN POLITICS.

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It is to be feared that we are not self-deceived in the opinion entertained generally, by those advanced in life, that young men of culture and ability are less disposed than formerly to accept either the honors or duties of public station. This indisposition is not to be attributed to an excess of modesty nor to a want of courage ; and it is the purpose of this paper to expose some of the prevalent errors concerning the conduct of public affairs, and the responsibilities and duties of those who take a leading part in giving direction to them.

Many causes and circumstances, some of them natural and proper, and others wholly artificial, have contributed to a public sentiment to which the young submit themselves more readily than others.

First of all are the inducements to enter upon other pursuits. The development of the country, of which the telegraph and the railway are at once the instruments and the evidence, has opened to the young many avenues to business and wealth which were unknown to former generations. A railway manager, or an expert in practical and scientific mining, can command a larger salary than is awarded to the chief officers of the Government at home or abroad. Manufactures and trade often yield large returns, and the exposures, trials, and dangers are thought to be less even than in the walks of politics and government ; while the professions of law and medicine offer each year increasing temptations in fame and pecuniary rewards. To be sure, the great prizes are few in every walk and pursuit, but the estimated magnitude and value of the chief prize in each measures generally the number of aspirants. If this is the only view to be taken, it is unreasonable to expect young men of learning and ability to enter the public service. It is probable, moreover, that many are deterred from the thought even of engaging in politics by the circumstance that but few escape calum-

nies, many of which in the end are shown to have been unjust, and that the exalted in place are the most exposed. Nothing of this can be denied, and it is difficult to promise that it will ever be otherwise, or to suggest any adequate compensation to the subjects of such injustice. It is poor consolation to say that so it has always been ; that so it was in Greece, in Rome, in England, in the United States even when Washington served in the field and presided in the Cabinet. As far as statements affecting unfavorably the personal or official character of public men are true, the victims are not entitled to defense or sympathy. But false statements disappear—no one can tell why or how. They linger for a time, they annoy, they disturb, but the innocent can await with composure and confidence the vindication which time will surely bring. Moreover, the people are both wise and just. They wait for evidence, and usually they do not condemn a public man in advance of sufficient proof. But, if it were otherwise, the young may well consider whether they ought to shun public duties because public men are exposed to calumny for which there is neither justification nor redress. The dangers of defending a country are great, the perils of governing a country are great also, but a country must be both defended and governed, and it can neither be defended nor governed without both courage and ability.

Others are deterred from entering political life by the belief that public employments are necessarily associated with or tend to personal degradation. This, I imagine, depends entirely upon ourselves. If we enter upon politics as a business, become dependent upon it, consider present success as the only worthy object of pursuit, our course will be attended with more or less of personal degradation. No man can perform his whole duty in public affairs unless he is in feeling and in fact free to retire from public life. If office is essential to his comfort or to his subsistence, there will be persons found to take advantage of his necessities and to place him under obligations, even though the obligations are free from all taint of dishonesty, which are inconsistent with that full and free devotion to the public interests which alone is acceptable to a just man.

It is also scarcely less important to maintain a position of independence before the great public. If it is a general opinion that a candidate or aspirant for office is wholly dependent upon public favor, there may be a disposition to deny the place merely because the aspirant is dependent. At any rate, it is better to stand upon

such terms of equality with the constituency as an honorable man may assume, without arrogance on the one hand or servility on the other. Indeed, the constituency is as much interested as the representative in establishing and preserving the relation of equality, which means mutual confidence and mutual obligations of duty. If a representative feels compelled to calculate and measure the public verdict upon each vote that he gives, he is a slave to a master whose will he can only conjecture but can never know, and the people are deprived of the benefit of the free action of the representative. It is true that the representative may wisely submit his individual judgment to the popular will upon a question of mere expediency, as that of an appropriation for the Centennial Exhibition, as an example ; or upon a question of supreme importance when the public mind has been directed to it, and an authoritative opinion has been formed and expressed. These, however, are the exceptional cases. For the most part the representative must act upon his own judgment, and he can perform his duty fully and for the true interest of the constituency only when he acts with freedom and in full confidence that the people will deal justly with him even if they can not approve of his course in every particular. In government fear is a tyrant, and the passions one and all are to be avoided even more than in private life.

The independence of which I have spoken must be actual, not assumed, for nowhere more certainly than in the management of public affairs are pretensions discovered and exposed. This independence might come from inherited wealth, other qualifications being found in its possessor, but the combination is so rare in this country that we can not look to this class exclusively, nor even chiefly for fit rulers. With us the governing class—I mean the class intrusted with the work of governing for limited periods of time—is not born but created, and we must look to those without inherited estates for representative men. Naturally the persons who either are or affect to be qualified for public employments fall into two classes—those who make politics a business, and those who shun every political duty except voting and complaining. There should be a third class—men who do not shun public employments, who are qualified to engage in them, and who are both too wise and too independent to sacrifice their manhood to gain popular support, and too just to the people to accept place without the power to perform its duties in a manner satisfactory, at least, to themselves.

Historians and critics may improve the world, but they can not

govern it ; and it is a higher employment, a nobler duty, to aid in providing or administering a reasonably good government than it is to show how things might be better than they are. Especially is this true when the critic or prophet of the past is a mere theorist in government or an adventurer in politics. Historians and critics are needed, and often their views and suggestions temper the policy or chasten the ardor of public men ; but those who make history, or provoke criticism even, are engaged, usually, in affairs that most deeply concern the paramount interests of communities and nations.

I can not doubt that the work of governing a great country is the first of secular pursuits, nor that those engaged worthily in it, even in the humbler departments, are in no insignificant sense public benefactors. If they who defend a country in the field are entitled to the public gratitude, are not those equally worthy who have created systems, founded institutions, and devised a policy in government which makes a country worth defending ? Usually the part which each man takes is an insignificant one ; even great actors are soon forgotten, and the roll of the immortal is less than the roll of the chief magistrates in any state, republic, kingdom, or empire. Those who seek or accept public office in the belief that thereby they are to become immortal are likely to be disappointed. The immortal few are they who have been prominently identified with great movements in opinion or government, in which men of all times are interested. The chief examples in this country are Washington and Lincoln. Of the thousands who have had a part in the government of the various States or in the government of the United States, who remembers anything ? The name of the man who served longer than any other in the Congress of the United States is not known to one in a hundred of the intelligent persons of the country. The severest chastener of human ambition is Lanman's "*Biographical Dictionary of Congress.*" Fame is not often the reward of public service, wealth never—and yet these are the two great motives to human effort. The first will remain and stimulate those engaged in public affairs, however infrequent the reward ; they who seek wealth will turn to other vocations. We are not, however, to act as though the good opinion of our fellow men were of no value, but the consciousness that we deserve the good opinion of our fellow men is of much more value. The first we may lose without misconduct on our part, the latter may remain even against an adverse public judgment. The good opinion of our fellow men though once lost may be recovered ; the conscious-

ness that we are not worthy of their good opinion is an abiding fact. This good opinion is to be accepted with thanks, not sought with servility ; and it is valuable only when it is an enforced tribute to capacity and integrity in the public service.

The business of government is a serious business, and yet there are men who enter into it as though it were a game of chance, or a contest in which success would wait upon the most expert in schemes of deception or plans of strategy. Usually men divide in opinion and act in parties upon questions which seem to be of public importance in the largest sense. Occasionally they are questions of peace or war, but more frequently the public mind is directed to questions of domestic policy, concerning personal rights or the business of the country. In modern times these are the topics that agitate every state in which the principle of representative government is recognized. In all these affairs, whether ordinary or critical and grave, the only safe men are those who have convictions, and who have also the courage to act upon them. Men of convictions are open to the charge that they are prejudiced, unreasoning, hot-headed in action. In some degree this is true, but the men who have done most for the world were men of strong convictions. On the other hand, they who stand aloof, who look with equal favor upon all parties and all opinions, who are at all times prepared by a chronic impartiality to sit in trial upon any public man or any public opinion, have in that service performed all the good of which they are capable.

The test of greatness is growth with the emergency, but men without convictions dwarf and become small as the public peril rises, and in great exigencies they are utterly insignificant. But firmness of conviction is not inconsistent with deliberation in plan and care in execution. Mr. Lincoln was a man of strong convictions, and to these he was anchored ; but his convictions never led him into passion, nor moved him to hasty action in public affairs.

There were those who balanced the responsibility for the war, who judged the North and the South equally guilty, who would have selected a few from each side who had been conspicuous in leadership and shot them in a public square, in the vain hope of pacifying a continent upon a great question of human rights which has concerned all men and will concern all men of all times. These were self-constituted leaders without convictions.

In the army the law was the same. The heroes and the only heroes were among those who believed wholly, unreservedly, in the

justice of the contest. In the combats of politics and in the real business of government our convictions must be our guide. It happens, not infrequently, that a public man is called to act upon questions which have been considered by the public and on which a judgment has been pronounced. If he is without convictions of his own, that judgment will lead him and perhaps mislead him. The public is a great fact, but it is not a definite fact. It may change its opinion, and no one can be held responsible. The representative, however, can be identified. His opinion is of record—he can be made responsible for it. If he acts upon a supposed public opinion and without the support of his own judgment, he has neither excuse nor defense when the considerate public judgment is formed and rendered. It is more just to the people to act upon our own convictions than it is to accept a public opinion which has been formed suddenly without a knowledge of all the facts and without time to estimate the value of those within reach. And the public can afford to excuse a representative who, in the absence of specific and authoritative instruction, acts upon his own convictions of duty, even though he may fall into error ; but the constituency can not afford to excuse the folly of a man who substitutes his impressions of public sentiment for the personal and representative obligations imposed upon him by the votes of the people and by the constitution of his country. Moreover, a representative who acts upon his convictions can not be deprived of the support which the fact furnishes, while he who abandons his opinions in deference to a public judgment hastily formed is without help when that public opinion undergoes a change.

There must also be faith in ideas. They who originate and enforce ideas decide in a large measure what the Government shall be and what it shall do, although the work of governing is usually in the hands of others. But it is not wise to deny the force of ideas, and it is the necessity and the duty of the statesman to accept and reject ideas in preparing himself generally, and in special cases often, for the duties of his position. Ideas, however, are sometimes so comprehensive and exacting that it is impossible to apply them fully in a given condition of things. At least so it may seem to the person or party charged with the application. Such was Mr. Lincoln's condition in reference to slavery for a year and a half after the war opened. The idea of liberty and equality, to which Mr. Lincoln was pledged, demanded the immediate and unconditional emancipation of all the slaves in the United States. The fact which Mr.

Lincoln was compelled to consider and estimate was the known opposition of a large number of otherwise loyal people to the abolition of slavery by force. As the waste and horrors of war increased, the number of those who thought that States could engage in an attempt to overthrow the Constitution without losing any of their rights under it, gradually diminished. Finally, the idea, in its fullness, could be accepted and enforced.

There are no more difficult problems in politics and government than those which relate to the application of ideas which are accepted by those on whom responsibility rests. Timid men may do nothing, bold men may do more than the public will either accept or justify ; but men both wise and bold will venture beyond the demand of the moment in the belief that the public will move toward the better in whatever relates to the welfare of the human race. If the ideas on which we are acting are sound, we may well assume the responsibility of applying them. There is, however, no positive test of the soundness of ideas, and men in places of power and responsibility are left to conclusions based on their own judgment as to what is wise. As a general proposition it may be assumed that measures which extend the range of industry, enlighten the people, increase or fortify popular liberty, will, in the end, receive the public approval. The same may be said of measures looking to the general defense in time of public danger. It is to be said, however, that it is much easier to present and enforce ideas which bear the test of scrutiny and argument than it is to apply them in the business of government.

It must be admitted that in every trial of intellect the opponents of slavery triumphed over its supporters. The application of their ideas was a more difficult task ; but it is to be said also that the victory in the end was a victory of ideas. The spread of antislavery opinions, and the well-founded apprehension that slavery must ultimately yield to the power of those opinions, made the defenders of the institution desperate, and in their desperation they sought to found a new Government in which slavery should not only be tolerated but established by name and protected by every possible safeguard. This movement converted all the friends of the Union into enemies of slavery, and thus the institution fell beneath two ideas—hatred of slavery and love for the Union. For seventy years attachment to the Union was the shield of slavery, but when slavery assailed the Union the friends of the Union became the enemies of slavery.

It is to be considered also that the ideas on which institutions



rest may sometimes outlast the institutions when the latter have yielded to force, as institutions will sometimes outlast the ideas which gave them birth. Slavery has fallen in America ; the institutions of government which were the growth and allies of the institution of slavery have fallen also ; but the ideas which gave rise to slavery, and which slavery bred and fostered, remain to fetter and paralyze the old slave States, and to disturb the Union. The war of ideas must go on until the triumph of ideas over ideas is as complete as has been the triumph of ideas over institutions.

The possession of wealth, affording leisure for study, is of prime advantage to young men who are preparing themselves for the public service, but in many instances it does not promote those habits of industry which are essential to permanent success. Experience shows that it is not easy for young men of fortune to devote themselves assiduously to the labors and duties of professional life, and it may be assumed that the labors and duties of public employments are not less exacting. Wealth is an aid if its possessor can impose upon himself the labor which his associates who are without money are compelled to perform. Moreover, the wealthy are called often—usually, perhaps—to contend against an idea or a prejudice that they are not of the people, and that they do not understand the interests, wants, and rights of the people as they are understood by the men who have been reared in poverty. If, in the eyes of the poor, wealth seems to be an advantage, the experience of America tends to prove that it is a hindrance as often as it is a help in the contests for public confidence and support.

Nor is it wise to rely upon what is known as genius, or mere natural ability, of any kind or degree. We must accept the fact that with most men honest, conscientious labor is the only means of success. The great statesmen of America have been students.

The remark applies to Jefferson, Hamilton, and Adams, of the Revolutionary epoch—to Webster, Adams, and Sumner, of later times. Possibly Mr. Lincoln may be thought an exception. He had, however, studied a few books carefully, thoroughly. The wisdom of the old maxim, "Beware of the man of one book," lies in a plain rule of life. The student of a few books studies those with such care that he knows all, and more than all, that was known by the authors of them. Every work of value in any department of real knowledge rests upon principles, which the casual reader may fail to comprehend, or may fail even to discover. To such a reader the work is of no permanent value, but the student who discovers

and comprehends the principle is the master of that subject in all its relations. For wisdom in affairs, a few books only are needed. For the knowledge of what has been done, many books must be consulted ; but power in public affairs is measured and apportioned by the degree of wisdom we possess rather than by the extent of our learning.

We do not advise young men to confine themselves to a few books, but we do advise them to read a few books relating to principles with such thoroughness that further reference to them will be unnecessary. The discipline is invaluable. It begets a habit of care in reading and hearing, and, as a public man in America is employed largely in the field of debate, nothing is more essential than the power to comprehend at once the full value, the complete significance, of what is said by others. The studies of a statesman are in the main those of a lawyer, to which should be added, with a larger liberality than is required in the profession, a knowledge of history, of political economy, and of constitutional law. If it be true, as was said in a spirit of sarcasm by Mr. Burke, that the study and practice of the law sharpens and narrows the mind, it remains true, and it must ever remain true, that in a government of laws there is a large field for the talents, learning, and wisdom of the lawyer. It is only when he degrades his profession and degrades himself that the public rebel against him and depose him from his fit place as maker and administrator of the laws. It is to be observed, however, not for criticism but for caution, that long practice in the courts unfits men for the work of legislation, as attention to politics and legislation unfits men for the closer discipline of the bar. The unyielding technicalities of the bar are out of place in the broad work of legislation, and the carefully trained and conscientious lawyer who carries the habits of the bar into the halls of legislation commits an error, dwarfs his influence, and limits the power of his constituency. The principles of law are of constant use in legislation, but the habits and arguments of the bar are out of place in its halls. Learning, tendered as learning, commands but little attention, and it is nearly destitute of influence in the business of government. Knowledge, what is called information, that is, knowledge relating to the subject under debate, is always respected. The ear of a legislative assembly can be gained usually when the speaker knows more than the majority of those who are to act ; but only unusual qualities as an orator can command attention when that degree of information is lacking.

Governing a country is practical business—nothing can be more practical. Most questions are to be treated, finally, upon grounds which a philosopher or an historian would consider narrow and inadequate. Occasionally a measure, like the repeal of the English corn laws, or the emancipation of the slaves in America, rests upon a basis as broad as the theories of philosophers or the demands of reformers. These are the exceptions. Institutions, traditions, a policy, are given. The legislator deals with a case subject to the power of institutions, traditions, and a policy. Moreover, one man is but one among many, equal in rights and equal in power. Upon a question of principle one may stand against a thousand ; but upon a question of the application of a principle there are both opportunity and necessity for concession. This statement suggests the difficult and dangerous periods in the life of a public man, inasmuch as the constituency may not agree with the representative upon the question whether a principle is or is not involved.

The government of free countries is largely in the hands of committees ; that of England wholly so, in the hands of one committee, called the Ministry, subject to the power of the House of Commons to remove a committee in office, and to dictate the appointment of another committee. In the United States there is a broader distribution of power among many committees, but there is nothing in the nature of omnipotence in any. The work of legislation, however, is shaped by them—the Houses confining themselves to a modification of measures in cases of approval, or to rejection in others. It is in extraordinary instances only that the work of a committee is reversed by either branch of a Legislature and an antagonistic policy adopted. The committees then are, and from the nature of legislation in a free country ever must be, the chief instruments and agencies in the work of government. In their proceedings there is no place for rhetoric, none certainly for brilliant talents of a popular character. The work is that of the investigator and the judge. The successful committee-man is he who makes himself acquainted with the nature of the duties assigned to the committee, in their practical and legal phases, and who then devotes himself assiduously to the details of each case, and to every question arising from or relating to the work in hand. This labor is unobserved, monotonous, and in a very few instances only does it command the applause or even secure the notice of the public. It is, however, the most important part of legislation, and no man can reach the highest place as a useful legislator who is indifferent to the business of the committee-room.

Beyond this, and only less important, is the faculty of advocating and defending before the assembly and before the constituency the opinions and measures of the committee. Indeed, one may rely in part upon clerks, authorities, and associates for the work of the committee-room, but in the public forum the manager of a measure or the supporter of a bill must depend upon himself for his successes. Here the faculty of debate is needed; and this faculty is distinguished from the ability to prepare and deliver an oration according to the ancient ideas, or to prepare and deliver a set speech in the fashion of modern times. The latter is a great gift, a valuable acquisition—both, indeed—but for the purposes of legislation it is inferior to power in debate, but by no means inconsistent with it. Debate is addressed to passing measures whose character and fate concern the assembly in the present, and on which members must act without delay. Debate implies present responsibility, from which none can escape. Set speeches and orations are usually addressed to subjects of general interest, on which, perhaps, no opinion has been formed either by the assembly or by the public. They imply care in their preparation; they are designed to advance or to resist a public sentiment; but neither the speaker nor the hearers feel the weight of responsibility that attends the enactment of laws or a change in a constitution.

In the accomplished debater two qualities are always found: first, a knowledge of his subject, including the general principles on which it rests or to which it relates; and, secondly, facility in using his knowledge. No one can succeed in debate who is not fully instructed, and by that I mean so instructed that he can answer every inquiry and repel every attack. This implies not only that he must know more of his subject than any other person in his audience, which is the prerequisite in ordinary discourse, but he must know more upon the topics in hand than everybody else. In addition to this he must have his knowledge at command, and at all times be ready to answer any comer, whether friendly or hostile. The coolness of temperament necessary to such a task is not the gift of nature, or, if it be a gift of nature, it is a gift to those only who are denied other qualities equally essential to the speaker. Practice, training in public and whenever opportunity arises, training upon real questions, to which should be added steady, persistent self-discipline, are the means by which young men are prepared for the field of debate. For the legislator, in a free country, capacity for debate is the power of powers; and we should never forget

that the capable, trained, skillful debater may become qualified for the work of preparing methodical discourses, but it does not follow, within any law which we can discover, that the mere orator will become a debater. The public speaker can not overvalue the intelligence of his audience. Assuming that his subject is within the range of their studies, thoughts, or duties, he should also assume that the best powers of the ablest man will not pass beyond their ability to judge his discourse and to profit from it. Even Mr. Webster was complimented by the disparaging criticism of a common man, who, after listening to one of the advocate's arguments, remarked : "It was no great thing ; just about what I would have said myself."

In the regions of oratory, where principles may be asserted broadly, the passions aroused, the imagination awakened and inflamed, the orator will pass beyond the limits of argument, and the hearers are forced to admit their inability to contest for equality. Once in a century, perhaps, the real business of government is controlled by such influences. But it is only at long intervals that the orator, the subject, and the tribunal are found in the necessary relations to each other. The orator often rules in the field of opinion where decisions are rendered which shape the policy of a country, but the application of the policy is left usually to less conspicuous persons, dealing with the practical business of government. The faculties to be sought, faculties within the reach of most young men, are habits of investigation and the power of debating. Oratory, in any high degree, is the result of many faculties and qualities, choice gifts of nature, to be improved when they exist, but in no case are they the mere product of education and training. The power of debating is the same for practical purposes as the power of addressing assemblies of the people upon questions of public concern ; for we can not imagine a skillful, practiced debater who might not speak with ease to himself and with advantage to his hearers upon subjects to which he had given attention.

The human voice, in music, upon the stage, in the pulpit, at the bar, in the legislative assembly, and in the assembly of the people, is the chief agent in the formation of opinion and in the direction of affairs. Therefore the faculty of speaking is not only not to be despised, but it is worthy of cultivation by all who design to devote themselves to any branch of the public service, which has in it the quality of governing either by law or by opinion. If it be not now, as it was before the art of printing, the sole power in affairs, it is

the omnipotent power to which the press even, from the very nature of its duties, is, and ever must continue to be, a secondary and in an important sense a subordinate force. Nor should young men allow themselves to be deluded with the notion that public business is now managed by men of less integrity and less ability than were possessed by those who controlled affairs in former times. In a country of schools, colleges, and universities, representative bodies must always contain able men, and every one who aspires to a part should accept the truth in the outset, that he is to encounter as his opponents or rivals the ablest products of schools, colleges, and universities. Not such will be all, but the contest is at the front, at the head of the column. I would not disparage our ancestry, but it is the error of every generation to attribute superior excellence to those that have preceded it. At intervals there are great crises in affairs, at intervals great characters appear, and the ordinary men of ordinary times are not to be measured by the extraordinary men of extraordinary times ; but for two centuries in Europe and America the standard of excellence has been advanced constantly, and the supply of capable men has been equal generally to the demand. It can not, therefore, be assumed that ordinary talents and inferior attainments will command places of trust and influence in the future, either near or distant.

Nor is it just to assume that the public men of this country are less capable than the public men of other countries. Upon the opinion of so experienced a person as Caleb Cushing, it may be claimed that the statesmen who carried the United States through the war of the rebellion and the period of reconstruction were quite equal to their predecessors in this Government and quite equal to their European contemporaries. I can speak from observation to the fact that since the year 1860 the foreign diplomatic corps at Washington has not been equal in ability to the representatives of the United States resident in other countries. It has been the habit of newspapers and travelers to disparage our diplomatic service, and, in exceptional cases, no doubt there has been occasion for complaint ; but in the main our ministers have been able and honorable men. In the beginning we were represented by Franklin, Adams, Jay, and others. In later times by the Adamses, Clay, Van Buren, Irving, Everett, Lawrence, Bancroft, Marsh, Cushing, Washburne, Motley, and a long line of men well and honorably known for their important services at home and abroad. Our system does not admit of trained diplomats, but training in politics and domestic govern-

ment is preparation altogether adequate for the safe conduct of international affairs.

The education given by the schools is of the essential preparation for public life, but it is not everything, and many a well-educated man will fail for lack of courage, from want of confidence in his own judgment, or for the reason that his manner of life does not inspire confidence in others. As a suggestion and a warning I venture the remark that in politics, as upon the thronged sidewalks of a populous city, the chief difficulties are from those who appear to be moving in the same direction with ourselves. The steps of our opponents we can comprehend, and we are at full liberty to treat them as antagonists. Among those who are moving with us are some who doubt, who hesitate, who question the wisdom of every proceeding. You can not treat them as enemies, and they will not treat you as friends. In politics and war victories are won by those who are in earnest, and in troublous times earnest men enjoy the public confidence. When weak and irresolute men rule, the annals of a country are usually uninteresting, inasmuch as in quiet times weak and irresolute men are often advanced to places of trust and power.

It is only after some experience and considerable reflection that we realize the worth of good government, and the difficulty of maintaining it. In proportion as we estimate the value of government, we shall estimate the honor and responsibility of the services we may be called to perform in its administration. If we consider the government of a small town, even, we shall not fail to realize that its fortunes are quite dependent upon the ability and fidelity of its public officers. In a period of years the condition of its roads, its schools, its finances—in a word, its standing among its neighbors—is due to the character, capacity, and policy of its chosen rulers. What is true of a town and its interests is alike true, and in more important particulars, of a state or nation.

If one does not shun public affairs, he must accept such posts as are offered to him, and give to the duties implied or imposed his attention, labor, and best judgment. The public demand this, and of right, for the obligation is not to be measured by the pecuniary compensation received, but by the nature of the duties attached to the office. This rule is a just rule in private affairs, but it is a rule of higher authority in the discharge of public duties, as, whether wisely or not, the salaries in most cases are not fixed upon the basis of private contracts. Moreover, there can be no assurance that

one is qualified for great undertakings who has not proved capable in lesser ones, and the duties of lesser ones are a fit preparation for the greater.

In no sphere of life is there opportunity for a larger or more enduring influence than in politics and government. The affairs of state are at once the most important, the most elevating, the most ennobling of human pursuits. Statesmanship concerns itself with the equitable relations of men in all their complications, not of citizenship merely in a particular country, but as members of the one human family distributed over the zones and continents of the globe. The generations of men appear and pass away, but ideas and institutions last through the ages. Governments coexist with the race, and whoever founds a good government or reforms a bad one is a benefactor whose influence extends along the ages.

GEORGE S. BOUTWELL.